Maintaining Capability and Options: Dismounted Reconnaissance in the Division and Corps Deep Area

A Monograph

by

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The US Army anticipates a future operating environment characterized by uncertainty and peer or near-peer threats able to contest technologically-based capabilities. The terrain of future conflicts may further inhibit aerial and mounted reconnaissance and surveillance operations. Current doctrine reveals a deep area focus for the corps and division headquarters. The conventional force limitation to aviation-based collection assets in the deep area degrades proper management and execution of the reconnaissance fundamentals. Case studies of Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and Operation Iraqi Freedom I reveal continuities of successful deep reconnaissance units and trends of increased risk aversion and operations in terrain environments extremely inhibitive to stealthy, dismounted reconnaissance. To provide capability and options the US Army should re-establish a long-range surveillance unit and a new dismounted reconnaissance specialty. The current state assumes risk with the capability for deep reconnaissance solely in the realm of special operations forces and continues the trend of decreasing proficiency in small unit patrolling.

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Abstract

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The US Army anticipates a future operating environment characterized by uncertainty and peer or near-peer threats able to contest technologically-based capabilities. The terrain of future conflicts may further inhibit aerial and mounted reconnaissance and surveillance operations. Current doctrine reveals a deep area focus for the corps and division headquarters. The conventional force limitation to aviation-based collection assets in the deep area degrades proper management and execution of the reconnaissance fundamentals. Case studies of Vietnam, Operation Desert Storm, and Iraqi Freedom I reveal continuities of successful deep reconnaissance units and trends of increased risk aversion and operations in terrain environments extremely inhibitive to stealthy, dismounted reconnaissance. To provide capability and options the US Army should re-establish a long-range surveillance unit and a new dismounted reconnaissance specialty. The current state assumes risk with the capability for deep reconnaissance solely in the realm of special operations forces and continues the trend of decreasing proficiency in small unit patrolling.

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Lastly, I must thank F Company, 51st Infantry (Long-Range Surveillance) who inspired this intellectual journey. The US Army's assignment F/51st Infantry to the XVIII Airborne Corps Headquarters Battalion, and subsequent inactivation during the same time-period, formed the questions who, where, and how the US Army should employ dismounted reconnaissance forces. A special thanks to CPT Ray Adams, their commander, and SSG Heath Henley, a team leader who I served with at the Ranger Training Brigade, who were part of F/51st Infantry during this time.

Acronyms

ABD	Airborne Division
AD	Armored Division
ATTP	Army Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures
ATP	Army Techniques Publication
ACR	Armored Cavalry Regiment
ARVN	Army of the Republic of Vietnam
BCT	Brigade Combat Team
BFSB	Battlefield Surveillance Brigade
CAB	Combat Aviation Brigade
CSI	Combat Studies Institute
CW	Continuous Wave
DCT	Dismounted Cavalry Troop
DOTMLPF-P	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities, Policy
EAB	Echelon Above Brigade
FF	Field Force
FLOT	Forward Line of Troops
FM	Field Manual
GCE	Ground Combat Element
IBCT	Infantry Brigade Combat Team
ID	Infantry Division
IN	Infantry
LRP	Long Range Patrol
LRRP	Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol
LRSLC	Long-Range Surveillance Leaders Course
LRSU/C/D	Long Range Surveillance Unit/Company/Detachment

MACV	Military Assistance Command Vietnam
MAGTF	Martine Air-Ground Task Force
MARSOC	Marine Special Operations Command
MFF	Military Free Fall
MOS	Military Occupational Specialty
ODS	Operation Desert Shield/Storm
OIF	Operation Iraqi Freedom
RPA	Remotely Piloted Aircraft
RSLC	Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course
SOF	Special Operations Forces
TRADOC	Training and Doctrine Command
TP	TRADOC Pamphlet
USAREUR	US Army Europe
USMC	US Marine Corps
USSOCOM	US Special Operations Command

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Introduction

> Our expanding technology has given us the employment of satellites for reconnaissance, specially designed aircraft, sophisticated infrared techniques, and many others. While these are an important, the man on the ground, well trained and alert, still remains an important element in our reconnaissance structure. Only he can go places where the infrared or the aerial camera cannot go.
>
> —Colonel Harold R. Aaron, Commander, 5th Special Forces Group (Airborne), US Army Vietnam Long Range Patrol Conference, 9-10 August 1968

The conventional US Army currently lacks an organic capability at the division and corps level, or Echelon Above Brigade (EAB), to conduct any ground reconnaissance operations without task organizing forces from subordinate units. Prior monographs examined the need to restore this capability, but focused on a mechanized or motorized heavy force composition, not a light infantry division.[1] In addition to the division cavalry squadron and corps cavalry regiment, the US Army historically possessed a long-range surveillance detachment or company (LRSD/C) to provide a deep dismounted reconnaissance or surveillance capability for the division and corps.[2] These units, both active and reserve component, are in the final stages of deactivation.[3] This, according to former XVIII Airborne Corps (ABC) and current Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Commanding General Stephen Townsend, presents a further degradation in the ability of those commanders to see the battlefield in the deep area and shape it for their subordinates.[4] As the US Army increases end strength and refocuses on high intensity conflict, it

[1] Daniel R. Ludwig, "Fighting Blind: Why US Army Divisions Need a Dedicated Reconnaissance and Security Force" (School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2017); Stephen M. Johnson, "Blind, Deaf, and Dumb: We Must Be Prepared to Fight for Information" (School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2017).

[2] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-55.93, Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2009), 1–2.

[3] "Army Structure Memorandum 2019-2023," October 11, 2016, i. Excerpt provided by XVIII Airborne Corps G37.

[4] Stephen J. Townsend, "Request for Surveillance Capability for Conventional Early Entry Forces" (XVIII Airborne Corps, Ft. Bragg, NC, April 26, 2016). Memorandum to US Army Forces Command provided by XVIII Airborne Corps G37.

should examine the need to reconstitute this ability for conventional force units as part of the menu of options for reconnaissance available for commanders at that echelon.

Senior leader remarks indicate a desire to refocus on decisive action, peer, or near-peer combat operations, and expand the Army after nearly two decades' focus on counterinsurgency warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan. At the 2016 annual convention of the Association of the United States Army, Chief of Staff General Mark Milley remarked on this imperative, citing resurgent Chinese and Russian threats to the dominance the US military has long enjoyed in domains like space, air, and cyber.[5] Conference discussions also focused on the new concept of multi-domain battle as a means of seeing the way forward against such threats through cross-domain synthetic action to achieve positions of advantage. As the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq progressed, the US Army accepted risk in modernization while peers invested heavily, closing capability gaps that existed since the end of the Cold War.[6] In 2017, as the US government proposed increases in defense spending, all services sought increased funding to expand in size and correct the apparent readiness gap. The Army plans to reverse the downward trend of its overall force size and is seeking to add approximately thirty thousand soldiers in the near term.[7]

This monograph begins by examining the doctrinal role of the EAB headquarters, reconnaissance doctrine, and the future operating environment to frame the problem of conducting reconnaissance in the deep area against a peer or near-peer competitor. A review of previous literature sets the stage for two case studies of dismounted reconnaissance operations:

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[5] "Army Chief: Future War Is 'Almost Guaranteed,'" *Association of the United States Army*, last modified October 4, 2016, accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.ausa.org/news/army-chief-future-war-%E2%80%98almost-guaranteed%E2%80%99.

[6] David G. Perkins, "Preparing for the Fight Tonight Multi-Domain Battle and Field Manual 3-0 » TRADOC," September 5, 2017, accessed October 30, 2017, http://tradocnews.org/preparing-for-the-fight-tonight-multi-domain-battle-and-field-manual-3-0/.

[7] Lucas Tomlinson, "Military Branches Drafting Expansion Plans as Trump Vows to Rebuild 'depleted' Force," Text.Article, *Fox News*, last modified February 21, 2017, accessed October 30, 2017, http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2017/02/21/military-branches-drafting-expansion-plans-as-trump-vows-to-rebuild-depleted-force.html.

the Vietnam War and a combined case study of Operations Desert Storm (ODS) and Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) I. The cross-case analysis identifies the continuities revealed in those case studies. The conclusion examines current force and sister service options and then offers two recommendations: re-establishment of a conventional force deep reconnaissance organization and creation of a dismounted reconnaissance occupational specialty.

The Purpose of the EAB Headquarters – The Deep Fight

The discussion of a requirement for any unit's structure and capabilities must begin with the purpose of that unit in context. The following analysis focuses on EAB headquarters—a division or corps—conducting a mission at the upper tactical or operational level in a near-peer hybrid threat environment. Field Manual (FM) 3-94, Theatre Army, Corps, and Division Operations, lists roles and tasks of the division and corps. These include serving as a tactical headquarters commanding two to five divisions or brigades, a joint task force, a joint force land component command, or an army forces headquarters—to integrate joint, army functional, and special operations capabilities.[8] The purpose of this integration is to shape the environment for subordinate units with capabilities they do not possess. The corps and division differ in scope, scale, and time horizon. The corps "shapes throughout an operational environment to set the conditions for the tactical success of subordinate divisions…shaping and sustaining in preparation for the next phase of operations."[9] The division focuses on a shorter time horizon, synchronizing joint and Army capabilities with brigade maneuver while planning branches and sequels to the current tactical phase.[10]

[8] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-94, Theater Army, Corps, and Division Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 1–7 to 1–8.

[9] Ibid., 5–1.

[10] Ibid., 7–1.

Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-94.2, Deep Operations and the newly-published FM 3-0, Operations, reinforce this focus on deep operations for both the corps and division. FM 3-0 notes that corps headquarters "play a significant role in physical and temporal deep operations" to "project into the future and decide what conditions can be created and exploited."[11] Division deep operations nest with and are reinforced by corps capabilities to identify gaps, seams, and opportunities beyond the range of their subordinate brigades.[12] ATP 3-94.2 refers to the responsibility to shape operations for subordinate units in the close area through deep operations as "fundamental" for a corps or division headquarters in a tactical role.[13] Figures 1 and 2, both from FM 3-0, depict this corps and division deep area in contiguous and non-contiguous areas of operations, defining the deep areas of both as those assigned to the unit but not to a subordinate organization. The aggregation of this doctrine illustrates the importance of EAB focus on operations in the deep area.

[11] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 1–34.

[12] Ibid.

[13] US Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-94.2, Deep Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016), iii.

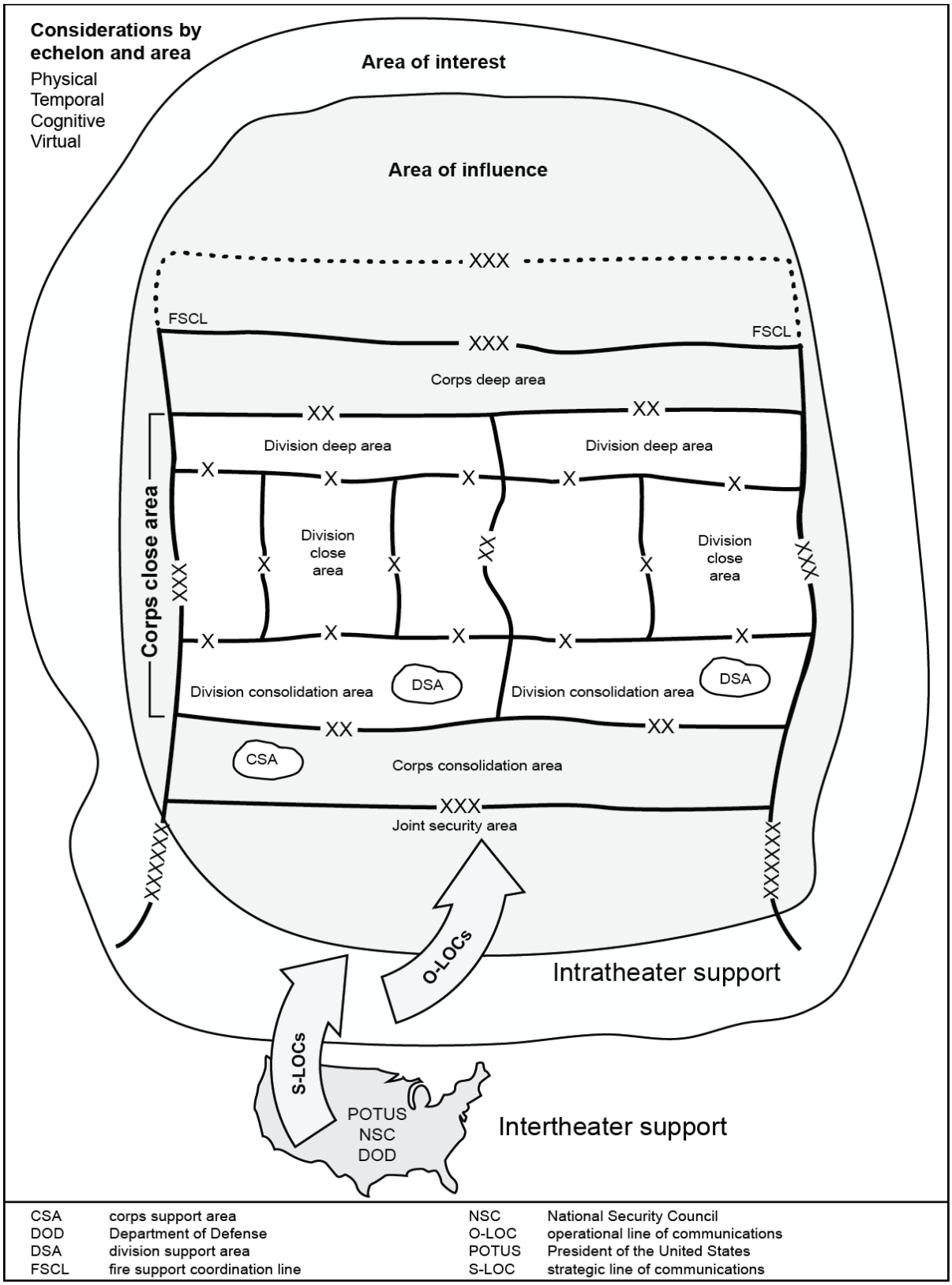

Figure 1. Contiguous Corps Area of Operations. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations 2017, 1-32.

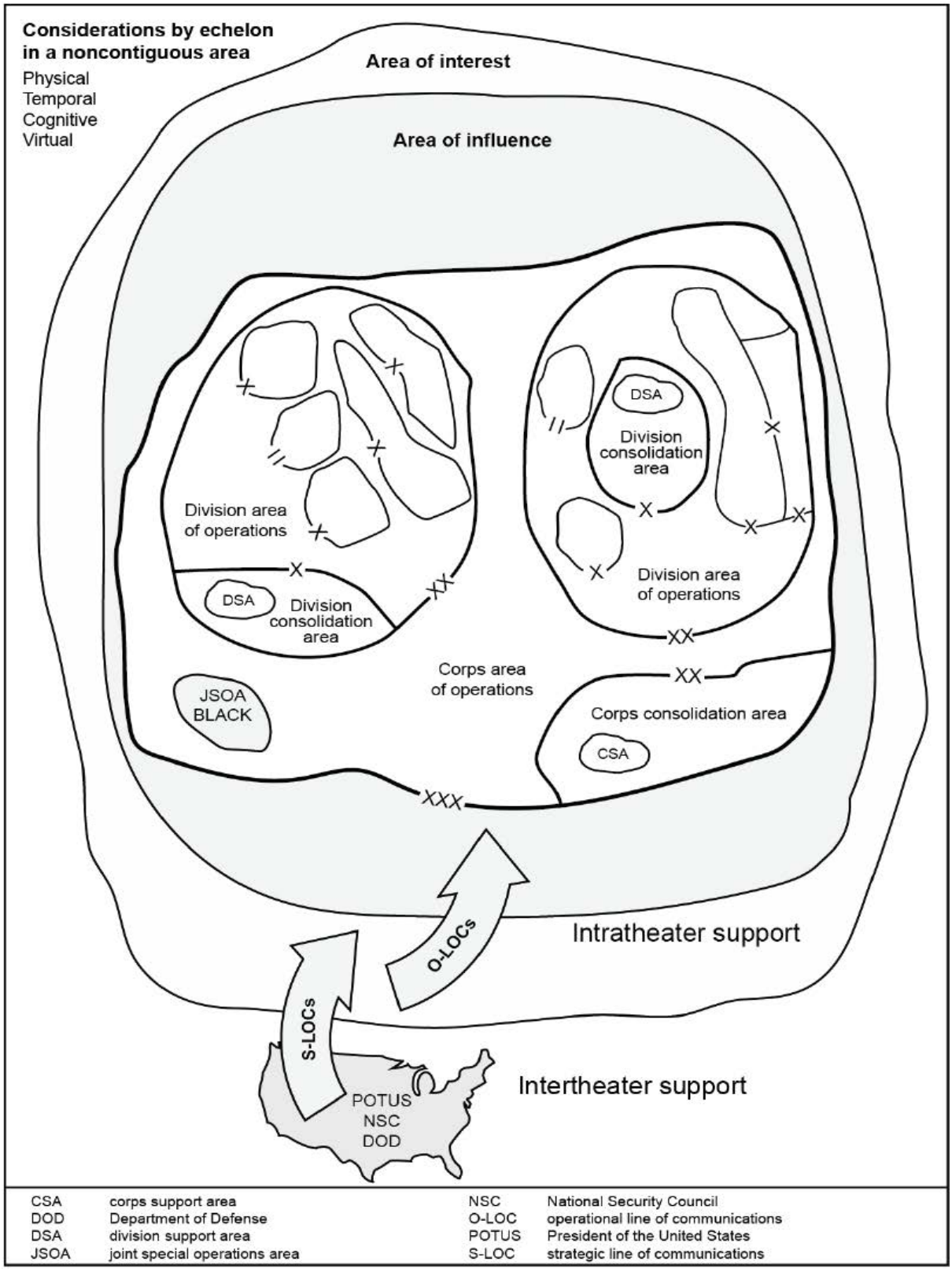

Figure 2. Non-Contiguous Corps Area of Operations. Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, 2017, 1-33.

Reconnaissance Doctrine Review

To create effects in the deep area, the EAB headquarters must collect information through reconnaissance and requesting or controlling appropriate targeting assets. Assets typically under the direct, exclusive control of an EAB headquarters, both to conduct reconnaissance and place effects, consist almost exclusively of army aviation and long-range fires assets. The division headquarters typically controls a combat aviation brigade (CAB), which has remotely piloted aircraft (RPA) and manned attack-reconnaissance aviation assets organic to its formation.[14] With the transformation of battlefield surveillance brigades (BFSB) to expeditionary military intelligence brigades in 2014, no organic or routinely assigned ground reconnaissance force falls under direct control of the EAB headquarters.[15] Instead, such capability requires ad hoc task organization out of forces from other subordinate units. The table below from FM 3-90-2, Reconnaissance, Security, and Tactical Enabling Tasks, shows the typical forces available at each echelon. Dated 2013, it still lists the long-range surveillance unit (LRSU) and BFSB as assets, and further classifies the dismounted cavalry troop (DCT) organic to the infantry brigade combat team (IBCT) as a LRSU equivalent.[16] FM 3-55.93, Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations, acknowledges the commonality in many aspects of infantry reconnaissance units, but clarifies the focus for special operations forces (SOF) at the strategic level, LRSU at the operational level, and infantry battalion scout platoons and dismount reconnaissance troops at the tactical level.[17] Having reviewed the assets available to the EAB headquarters, the next necessary discussion is their doctrinal employment.

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[14] FM 3-94, 6–7.

[15] Andrew Fowler, Brian Fitzgerald, and Pete Rose, "Retaining Army National Guard Long Range Surveillance Companies" (TCM-Reconnaissance, CDID, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Ft. Benning, GA, February 26, 2015), 1. Document provided by Mr. Pete Rose through email correspondence.

[16] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-90-2, Reconnaissance, Security, and Tactical Enabling Tasks (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), 1–4.

[17] FM 3-55.93, 1–4.

Table 1. Typical Reconnaissance and Surveillance Assets Available

	Platoon	CO/TM	BN/TF	BCT	Division	Corps
Observation post	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Reconnaissance patrol	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Combat outpost	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Scout platoon	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Reconnaissance troop		AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	
Brigade combat team reconnaissance squadron		AAA	AAA	XXX	AAA	
Chemical reconnaissance		AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX	XXX
Artillery combat observation and lasing team	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX		
Artillery target acquisition systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Air defense target acquisition systems			AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX
Ground surveillance radars		AAA	XXX	XXX		
Other military intelligence collection systems			AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Attack reconnaissance squadron				AAA	XXX	XXX
Unmanned aircraft systems	AAA	AAA	AAA	XXX	XXX	XXX
Long-range surveillance unit					AAA*	XXX
Special forces/ranger					AAA	AAA
Battlefield surveillance brigade					XXX	XXX
Technical surveillance platforms			AAA	AAA	AAA	AAA

XXX = Echelon controls or routinely tasks the asset.
AAA = Echelon can routinely expect the information from that source to be made available to it.
*Found in infantry brigade combat team and battlefield surveillance brigade reconnaissance squadrons.

CO/TM company/team
BN/TF battalion task force
BCT brigade combat team

Source: Field Manual (FM) 3-90-2, Reconnaissance, Security, and Tactical Enabling Tasks (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013), 1–4.

The fielded force should possess the capability to fulfill requirements and principles defined in doctrine. This study compares the ability of available assets to accomplish reconnaissance in the EAB deep area against the fundamentals and management of reconnaissance described in FM 3-98, Reconnaissance and Security Operations.[18] The fundamentals and management of reconnaissance inform commanders' integration of the forms and methods.

Army doctrine lists seven fundamentals of reconnaissance: ensure continuous reconnaissance, gain and maintain enemy contact, do not keep reconnaissance assets in reserve, orient on reconnaissance objectives, report all information rapidly and accurately, develop the situation rapidly, and retain freedom of maneuver.[19] Specific circumstances can place these

[18] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 3-98, Reconnaissance and Security Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2015), 5–1 to 5–6.

[19] Ibid.

principles in tension with others, and it is the art of reconnaissance management to find the optimal balance in execution.

Achieving this balance of the fundamentals is the goal of reconnaissance management—cueing, mixing, and redundant employment of assets to address critical information requirements in priority at the appropriate time. Cueing refers to using one form or method of reconnaissance to initiate follow-on or more detailed collection by another form or method; mixing involves using different types of reconnaissance or assets concurrently to develop the most complete picture possible; redundancy means making use of multiple similar assets or techniques against the same requirement.[20] Successful management achieves the maximum possible breadth and depth of collection by prioritizing intelligence requirements and creating synergy between the different capabilities and limitations of each form, asset, and method, using the strengths of one to counterbalance the limitations in the others.

US Army units conduct reconnaissance in five forms: zone, area, route, reconnaissance in force, and special reconnaissance. Doctrinally, only SOF conduct special reconnaissance, in hostile, denied, or politically sensitive environments to address strategic or operational information requirements. Special reconnaissance typically employs capabilities and assets not usually available to conventional force units.[21] Reconnaissance in the division or especially the corps deep area has many of the same characteristics, since enemy forces tend to exert greater control over these areas.

Reconnaissance forces combine the methods of mounted, dismounted, aerial, and reconnaissance by fire to gather information within the forms. Each method complements the others and has strengths and weaknesses which make it more appropriate in given

[20] FM 3-98, 5–4.

[21] Ibid., 5–6. Zone reconnaissance is the broadest in scope, while area and route are more specific in their requirements and area. A battalion/squadron task force or larger conducts reconnaissance in force to develop threat strength, disposition, and reactions through deliberate contact.

circumstances.[22] Mounted reconnaissance enables a rapid tempo but increases the risk of compromise of those reconnaissance forces. Dismounted reconnaissance is the most time consuming but also enables the most detailed collection of information on the reconnaissance objective.[23]

Army or joint aviation assets conduct aerial reconnaissance. The advantages of aerial platforms include extended range, speed, and ability to reconnoiter areas where threat and terrain conditions inhibit ground reconnaissance. However, they are vulnerable to poor weather, enemy air defense systems, and the ability to cover large areas relatively quickly results in degraded information detail.[24] An example of this in Operation Anaconda in 2002 is the failure of multiple aerial platforms to locate a heavy machine gun on the aircraft ingress route. This clearly shows this limitation of aerial reconnaissance, even when not affected by weather. A SOF ground reconnaissance team detected this heavy machine gun position and destroyed the threat prior to the coalition's air assault into the Shahikot Valley.[25]

Aerial reconnaissance often cues other assets for more detailed reconnaissance. Mounted and dismounted reconnaissance mix together to achieve optimum effect. Units conduct reconnaissance by fire—firing into suspected or known enemy locations—as a sub-set of one of the other methods.[26] No one method of reconnaissance is sufficient by itself; the art of managing

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[22] FM 3-98, 5–2.

[23] Ibid., 5–3 to 5–4. Units use mounted reconnaissance to take advantage of the standoff provided by mounted weapons systems and sensors, when time available limits options, long distances require mounted movement, stealth and security are not primary concerns, and the nature of the reconnaissance objective allows vehicular approach. Dismounted reconnaissance works best when the mission requires stealth, security, and detailed information; sufficient time is available; the objective is a stationary threat, fixed site, or terrain feature; the unit has made or expects enemy contact; and terrain does not permit the use of vehicles or other sensors to collect the needed information.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Sean Naylor, *Not a Good Day to Die: The Untold Story of Operation Anaconda* (New York: Berkley Books, 2005), 174.

[26] FM 3-98, 5-3 to 5-4.

reconnaissance is finding the optimal combination of the different methods and forms to maximize timely information to enable commander decisions.

A reconnaissance force envisioned for use by any given echelon should enable proper management of assets through mixing, cueing, and redundancy to execute collection plans characterized by the fundamentals of reconnaissance. Having reviewed the principles and doctrine by which an EAB headquarters should conduct reconnaissance, the assets available to conduct that reconnaissance, and where it will take place within the deep–close–sustaining framework, one must consider the operating environment within which the Army anticipates conducting these operations.

The Future Operating Environment

General David G. Perkins, the US Army TRADOC commanding general from 2014 to 2018, described the future operating environment for the next generation of conflict, 2020 to 2040, as "not only unknown but unknowable and constantly changing."[27] This conception of the combat environment makes the ability to collect, interpret, and disseminate accurate intelligence information a crucial capability for military forces to drive action. Adversaries will increasingly contest the ability to maneuver in the environment and obtain information in all domains as a means of deterrence to limit freedom of action, entry into the theater, and developing situational understanding.[28] Advances in commercially available technology enable opponents to contest these domains, making the environment increasingly lethal as potential opponents achieve greater parity with US Army forces.[29] The US Army's answer to this parity is "multi-domain battle," as

[27] US Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet (TP) 525-3-1, The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), iii.

[28] US Department of the Army, TRADOC Pamphlet(TP) 525-3-6, The US Army Functional Concept for Movement and Maneuver 2020-2040 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017), 10.

[29] Ibid., 11.

noted in TRADOC Pamphlet (TP) 525-3-1, The US Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, to "provide the Joint Force with multiple options, integrate the efforts of multiple partners, operate across multiple domains, and present our enemies and adversaries with multiple dilemmas."[30] What this means for operations as a whole also applies to subordinate operations. In the context of the following analysis, intelligence collection must maximize use of varied collection capabilities and techniques to present multiple threats and obtain the needed positions of advantage in multiple domains.

The only intelligence collection assets that can reach the deep area under the direct control of an EAB headquarters are manned and un-manned aviation assets.[31] The discussed limitations of aerial reconnaissance create tension with the fundamentals and proper management of reconnaissance. The fundamentals of conducting continuous reconnaissance and gaining and maintaining contact are under the most pressure. The limitations of aerial reconnaissance caused by weather, enemy air defense, and endurance mean that significant gaps in coverage on critical locations could exist if only aerial reconnaissance is available. The primary advantage of aerial reconnaissance assets, the agility to reposition quickly over great distances, means they are one of the first assets requested and moved during crisis response to gain information about a current situation. The desire of a headquarters to see and direct the close battle, or task organize the asset to a subordinate unit to support its operations, will always compete with the requirement to conduct deep reconnaissance to shape future operations, creating tension with the fundamental of orienting on reconnaissance objectives. The incorporation of ground reconnaissance into the deep area provides options for better reconnaissance management, but comes with trade-offs in tempo, risk, and survivability.

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[30] TP 525-3-1, iii.

[31] As described above, this is the case based on the typical assignment of an aviation brigade to an EAB headquarters and that the EAB has not requested additional assets from the higher HQ or deprived a subordinate unit of their reconnaissance assets.

Problem Statement

The EAB headquarters in a tactical or operational role must overcome gaps in typically assigned aviation-based reconnaissance assets created by electronic warfare, air defense, and weather to maintain reconnaissance, surveillance, and targeting ability in the deep area in accordance with the reconnaissance fundamentals. Stealthy, dismounted ground reconnaissance should be part of the mitigation of that gap. The question is whether the need is great enough that the EAB headquarters possess specifically organized forces instead of removing assets from subordinate units or requesting outside augmentation. The more general question addresses the limitations of dismounted, ground reconnaissance and its employment. Specifically, the following analysis asks if the feasible situations are so few and the risk so high that any dismounted operations in the deep area should remain solely in the SOF realm.

Literature Review

Corps and division level reconnaissance and security operations are topics of continual and varied debate. This review includes two sections: one that reviews the subject of division and corps reconnaissance in general and another that reviews works on dismounted reconnaissance and LRSU operations, organization, and employment. The first section provides the point of departure and context of division and corps reconnaissance and security operations writ large, of which dismounted reconnaissance makes up just a part.

Several recent publications have addressed the issue of reconnaissance and security at the corps and division level. In his 2017 monograph "Blind, Deaf, and Dumb: We Must Be Prepared to Fight for Information," US Army Lieutenant Colonel Stephen Johnson argued that the reconnaissance brigade combat team concept, even though it addressed the need for a dedicated reconnaissance force of brigade size at the corps level, did not fully meet the corps' requirements to fight for information.[32] He argued that this failure resulted from reliance on a single vehicle

[32] Johnson, "Blind, Deaf, and Dumb," 3.

platform—the Stryker family of vehicles— that lacked sufficient armor, forcing the troops inside to dismount when in contact, thus losing mobility and placing the decision to maintain contact in the hands of the enemy force.[33] He recommended the troop-level organization of the corps reconnaissance force should include a tank platoon, two Bradley platoons, and one Stryker platoon to provide a mix of lethality, mobility, and survivability.[34] Johnson emphasized the need for reconnaissance to fight for information vice relying on a deep surveillance capability, focusing the dismounted role in local conjunction with mounted forces.

At the division level, US Army Major Daniel Ludwig in "Fighting Blind: Why US Army Divisions Need a Dedicated Reconnaissance and Security Force" argued for a reconstitution of a division cavalry-like organization using similar logic. He noted four historical continuities that justified the need for such a reconnaissance force: the need to fight for information; blended ground, air, and technical capabilities; a maneuver differential over the enemy and the friendly main body; and effective mission command for the scope of the task.[35] Ludwig found faults with the recommendations in ATP 3-91, Division Operations for the division to conduct reconnaissance and security operations: direct subordinate units to answer the intelligence requirements, task an entire brigade with the conduct of division security and reconnaissance, detach a battalion or squadron from one of the subordinate BCTs, or request support from the corps LRSC.[36] He faulted the first option as possible only if the division foregoes the responsibility to act in the deep area, which by definition has no subordinate units assigned. The second course of action he criticized for an excessive reduction in available combat power in the close fight, and the lack of collective training that brigades receive for reconnaissance and

[33] Johnson, "Blind, Deaf, and Dumb," 31.

[34] Ibid., 34.

[35] Ludwig, "Fighting Blind," 13.

[36] US Department of the Army, Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-91, Division Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2014), 8–5.

security tasks. He faulted the third option because the cavalry squadron lacks organic assets with the breadth of aviation, fires, and sustainment assets required for a division mission, and doing so degrades the ability of brigades to conduct reconnaissance or security in their own areas.[37] These conclusions have similar bearing on the formation of a dismounted reconnaissance force at the division level. However, like the monograph on corps reconnaissance and security, this monograph also did not analyze the specific mixing of mounted and dismounted reconnaissance; it addressed only ground, aerial, and technical capabilities.

Much of the underpinning of these two recent monographs and the balance between stealthy reconnaissance and fighting for information are from two works, Robert S. Cameron's 2009 Combat Studies Institute (CSI) book *To Fight or Not to Fight* and US Army Colonel Curtis D. Taylor's 2005 *Trading the Saber for Stealth.*[38] Both emphasize the inability of reconnaissance organizations insufficiently armed, mobile, and armored enough to fight for information to accomplish reconnaissance or security missions and maintain freedom of maneuver for the higher headquarters. They argue historical reconnaissance organizations emphasizing stealth and remaining out of contact with the enemy were ineffective at collecting necessary information and unable to avoid decisive engagement. This removed options and forced decisions by their higher headquarters instead of enabling freedom of maneuver and flexibility.[39]

Colonel Taylor summarized the tensions surrounding the composition and employment of reconnaissance forces in *Trading the Saber for Stealth.* He posited an interaction between tempo—the rate of decision making—and risk appetite to create a "stealth threshold" for the use of light reconnaissance forces (Figure 3). The acceptable level of risk for light reconnaissance

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[37] Ludwig, "Fighting Blind," 28–29.

[38] Robert S. Cameron, *To Fight or Not to Fight? Organizational and Doctrinal Trends in Mounted Maneuver Reconnaissance from the Interwar Years to Operation IRAQI FREEDOM* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2009); Curtis D. Taylor, *Trading the Saber for Stealth: Can Surveillance Technology Replace Traditional Aggressive Reconnaissance?*, The Land Warfare Papers 53 (Arlington, VA: The Institute of Land Warfare, Association of the US Army, 2005).

[39] Taylor, *Trading the Saber for Stealth*, 1, 16, 22–23; Cameron, *To Fight or Not to Fight?*, 569.

forces will support a given tempo of operations. If requirements dictate a higher tempo, the commander must either accept more risk or not use stealthy reconnaissance forces. The author then described a relationship between battlefield density and the effectiveness of aerial reconnaissance (Figure 4). He defined battlefield density as the ability to distinguish the enemy combatant from surroundings. The denser the battlefield, the less useful aerial reconnaissance. He combined these relationships in a single model, showing that recent conflicts fall within the high tempo and high battlefield density that go over the "stealth threshold" for effective use of stealthy and aerial reconnaissance (Figure 5).[40] Stealthy reconnaissance thus has a niche in battlefields restricted terrain has made extremely dense, if the tempo is low enough to keep such operations at an acceptable risk level.

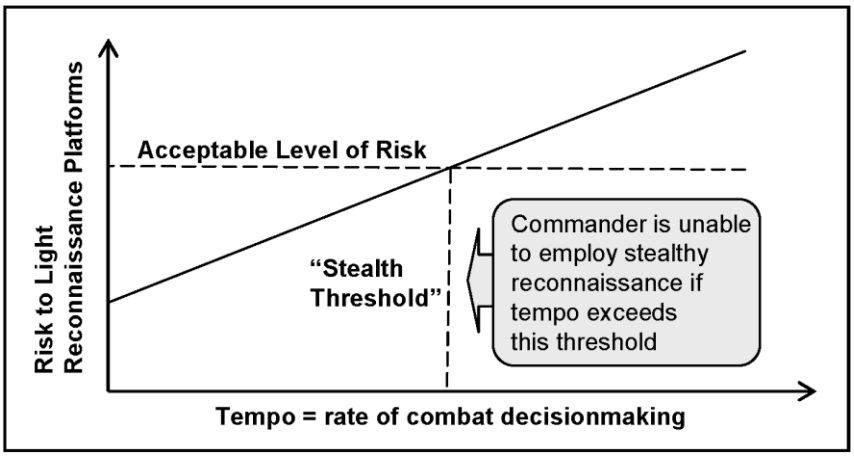

Figure 3. The Relationship between Tempo and Risk to Light Reconnaissance, *Trading the Saber for Stealth,* 2005, 14.

[40] Taylor, *Trading the Saber for Stealth*, 14–16.

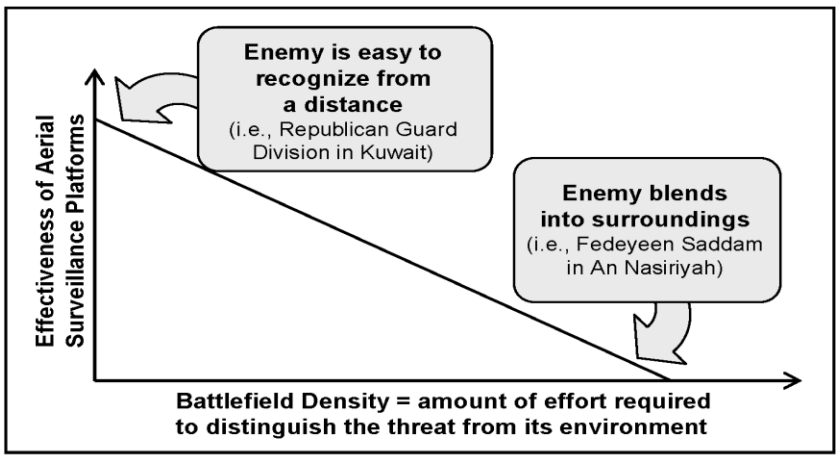

Figure 4. The Relationship between Battlefield Density and the Effectiveness of Aerial Surveillance Platforms, *Trading the Saber for Stealth,* 2005, 15.

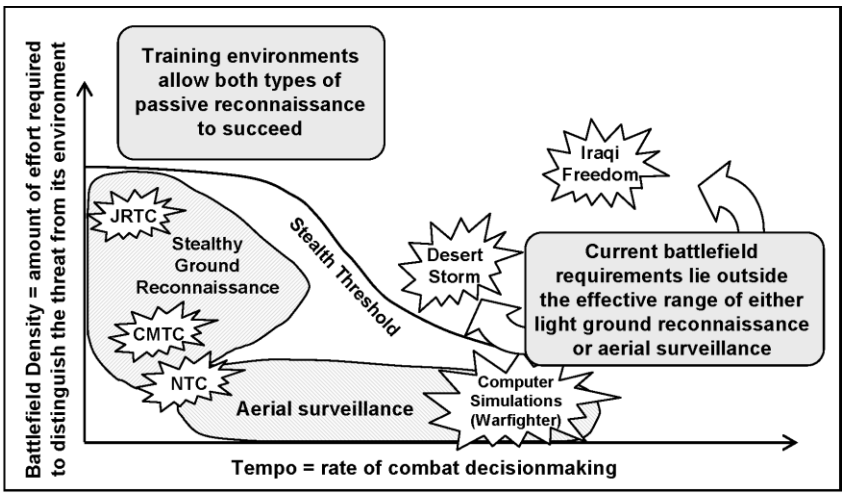

Figure 5. The Combined Effects of Operational Tempo and Battlefield Density on Reconnaissance Operations, *Trading the Saber for Stealth,* 2005, 16.

Reviewing this literature reveals a gap in recent analysis on determining the limits of conventional dismounted reconnaissance as an integral part of effective reconnaissance management at the upper tactical or operational level. The most germane and recent work is US Army Major Michael Larsen's 2005 monograph, "Organizational Structure of Deep Ground Reconnaissance for Future Divisions and Corps." He concluded conventional force deep dismounted reconnaissance was still relevant and filled the gap already discussed, but that LRSUs

were flawed in their organizational structure.[41] He recommended consolidation of active and reserve component LRSUs into a "Scout Brigade" with all-NCO teams to ensure uniformity of training, equipping, and leadership to allow more effective and modular employment across the entire force.[42]

US Army Majors Mark Meadows and David P. Anders made similar recommendations in their Masters of Military Arts and Science Theses. Major Meadows, in his 2000 thesis "Long-Range Surveillance Unit Force Structure in Force XXI," focused on education and training of leaders knowledgeable in the unique requirements of deep reconnaissance operations.[43] Major Anders, in his 1999 thesis "Long Range Surveillance Unit Application in Joint Vision 2010," used an analysis of capabilities versus requirements coupled with a survey of leaders with LRSU experience to recommend consolidation at the battalion level, organic to the corps military intelligence brigade, to centralize training and allow for task organized support to the entire army.[44]

Another significant source of information is James Gebhardt's 2005 CSI report *Eyes Behind the Lines: US Army Long-Range Reconnaissance and Surveillance Units*. The impetus for this report was a perceived lack of return on investment from LRSUs in Operations Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom: forces in a conventional fight moved too fast for deep dismounted teams to be employed, and commanders proved reluctant to accept the risk involved.[45] He concluded that a

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[41] Michael M. Larsen, "Organizational Structure of Deep Ground Reconnaissance for Future Divisions and Corps" (School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2006), 10.

[42] Ibid., 61.

[43] Mark R. Meadows, "Long-Range Surveillance Unit Force Structure in Force XXI" (US Army Command and General Staff College, 2000), 5.

[44] David P. Anders, "Long-Range Surveillance Unit Application in Joint Vision 2010" (US Army Command and General Staff College, 1999), 70.

[45] James F. Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines: US Army Long Range Reconnaissance and Surveillance Units*, Global War on Terrorism Occasional Paper vol.10 (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2005), 1..

survivable role remained for small teams of dismounted soldiers in deep reconnaissance, arguing that the lack of employment in southwest Asia was an aberration due to the extreme lack of concealment in the desert environment.[46] Gebhardt noted in his conclusion that the US Army historically used LRSUs to fill gaps and complement technology, not to replace or be replaced by it: "in the same manner that these soldiers, no matter how well trained and physically fit, have never replaced technology, neither should technical means alone be viewed as the sole provider of timely and accurate battlefield reconnaissance and surveillance."[47] This monograph makes a similar argument regarding the relationship of stealthy reconnaissance to fighting for information: neither is by itself sufficient because each depends on the other.

As part of BFSB development in 2005, the TRADOC Analysis Center conducted a study on the need and optimal organization of ground reconnaissance assets for the new modular division level headquarters. The study examined major combat operations and stability operations in multiple environments, comparing the effectiveness of the then-current LRSD, the Infantry Center's proposed LRSC, an intermediate composite design between the LRSC and LRSD, and a battalion-sized organization, the latter two incorporating vehicle-based reconnaissance rather than dismounted teams only.[48] The authors found the requirements for long-range ground reconnaissance as "few, but critical" with four characteristics: they emerged when the commander required a high degree of confidence in the ability to obtain accurate information; they occurred in areas unassigned to subordinate units, whether in the deep area or in unassigned areas in the non-contiguous framework around the BCT; they occurred prior to and during operations, or continuously; and they supported decision points.[49] The study concluded that the

[46] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 163–64.

[47] Ibid., 163.

[48] Jeff Joles et al., *Long Range Ground Reconnaissance Study Final Report* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: TRADOC Analysis Center, November 22, 2005).

[49] Ibid., 38–39.

LRSD option with six teams was insufficient for UEx information requirements in the deep area, the LRSC had excess capability to satisfy only the high priority deep requirements, the composite company could similarly satisfy the deep requirements, and none of the options, including the battalion level organization, could satisfy the mounted reconnaissance requirements across the entire UEx area of operation.[50] Most significantly, coming after the LRS units misgivings expressed by US Army Colonel Gregory Fontenot, and US Army Lieutenant Colonels E. J. Degan, and David Tohn in the 2004 CSI publication *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom*, the authors of the study still found a need for the capability in the conventional force.[51]

This literature review reveals two significant points. The first is no deliberate study of either LRSUs specifically, or EAB deep reconnaissance in general has found the US Army no longer needs the capability to conduct dismounted stealthy reconnaissance. Additionally, the most recent study is ten years old, and covers a topic not deliberately revisited for analysis before the US Army eliminated LRSUs from the force structure.

Methodology

This monograph examines the historic capabilities and organization of past dismounted reconnaissance units against the fundamentals and management of reconnaissance. It does so using two historical cases: long-range patrol (LRP) and ranger units in the Vietnam War, and a combined study of LRSU employment in ODS and OIF I. Each case study compares the elements of the operational environment to the anticipated future environment, summarizes the forces considered within the force management framework of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P), and then presents an

[50] Jeff Joles et al., *LRGR Study Final Report*., 40. The UEx was the designation of the division level headquarters during the 2004 transformation process.

[51] Gregory Fontenot, E. J. Degen, and David Tohn, *On Point: The United States Army in Operation Iraqi Freedom* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute Press, 2004), 164, 423.

analysis of unit effectiveness against the fundamentals of reconnaissance and management techniques.[52] These case studies collectively span a spectrum of warfare in multiple terrain environments and provide a solid foundation for an argument about the future of conventional force dismounted reconnaissance. A cross-case analysis examines the continuities between the case studies on the need for dismounted reconnaissance and what makes it effective.

The conclusion draws from those continuities and examines potential solutions in the US Marine Corps and US Army force structure to support the recommendation regarding the optimal echelon and organization of a LRSU within the conventional force. The alternative, and current status quo, is wholesale transfer of this mission to SOF. The decision between these two options ultimately comes down to the feasibility and acceptability of the resources required to man, train, and equip a conventional force unit able to appropriately mitigate the risk inherent in this type of operation.

Thesis

A gap exists in the aviation-centric reconnaissance capability at the division and corps deep area created by weather, near-peer threat air defense systems, and threat electronic warfare capability. The US Army should mitigate this gap with a ground-based deep reconnaissance force. This force should organize as a single battalion or brigade-sized unit capable of task organization into smaller companies and detachments able to flexibly support operations at the brigade, division, and corps level. This force will integrate with or receive support from SOF assets. However, the strategic-level focus of SOF organizations means they should not retain sole responsibility or capability for this mission to support conventional force headquarters. This will prevent loss of focus on operational and tactical reconnaissance objectives while avoiding excessive dispersion of limited SOF assets.

[52] US Department of the Army, *2015-2016 How the Army Runs: A Senior Leader Reference Handbook* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, August 28, 2015), 1–2.

Case Study 1: Vietnam Long-Range Patrol Units

The American combat action in Vietnam has strong relevance as a case study for the future operating environment. The enemy threat was composed of a mix of guerilla forces and conventional force units operating in conjunction on the battlefield, much as expected in the potential future operating environment. The terrain of Vietnam also presented, in many ways, the ideal case for the use of dismounted, stealthy reconnaissance as it inhibited many other methods. US forces used technology most effectively in conjunction with other, traditional collection methods. The only thing lacking in the scenario of Vietnam that would apply directly to an analysis of future use is the lack of contestation in the air domain; in South Vietnam where US forces waged ground combat, only low-altitude, direct fire threatened US forces in the air domain.

DOTMLPF-P Summary

The US Army first published doctrine for infantry long-range patrols in 1962 as FM 31-18, Long Range Patrols, Division, Corps, and Army. TRADOC updated this manual's title in 1965 to Infantry Long Range Patrol Company, and then in 1968 to Long Range Reconnaissance Patrol Company. The manuals shared much in common, focusing on a conventional ground war with units only authorized at the corps or field army level, and provisionally at the division level.[53] They did vary slightly, however. The 1965 manual described the purpose of LRP units to "enter a specified area within the enemy's rear to observe and report dispositions, installations, and activities." Additional specific tasks included tactical damage evaluation, landing zone and drop zone reconnaissance, target acquisition, and limited raids.[54] Teams inserted as a stay-behind

[53] Shelby L. Stanton, Rangers at War: Combat Recon in Vietnam (New York: Orion Books, 1992), 46; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 31-18, Infantry Long Range Patrol Company (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1965), 2; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 31-18, Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol Company (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1968), 3.

[54] FM 31-18 (1965), 3.

force during a withdrawal or by foot, water, air landing by helicopter, or airborne insertion. Once inserted, the teams were limited to foot movement and stealth by dismounted patrolling.[55] The 1968 version of the manual reorganized similar material, but defined the role of the company to operate in the "area of interest" so as to "not duplicate organic unit reconnaissance," in language of the period relating to the deep area defined in current doctrine.[56] The 1968 edition also included a new chapter on stability operations and the formation of provisional units based on lessons learned in operations as they had actually been conducted up to that point.[57] The need for the capability was understood, as reflected in the formalized doctrine, but the actual organization of units to execute it would not be officially authorized and equipped for several years after the conflict in Vietnam began.

Units purposed for the LRP mission were not part of the authorized force structure in Vietnam. US Army Special Forces, followed by conventional units like the 173rd Airborne Brigade and 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division (ABD), recognized the need and formed provisional units with on-hand personnel and equipment.[58] General Westmoreland, the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) commander, recognized the success of these units. In 1966, he directed all divisions and separate brigades to organize LRP units provisionally with on-hand personnel and equipment, pending Department of the Army approval.[59] The formal authorization—announced at the September 25, 1967 MACV Commander's conference—

[55] FM 31-18 (1965), 3, 20–21.

[56] FM 31-18 (1968), 3.

[57] Ibid., 21–25; Michael Lee Lanning, *Inside the LRRPs: Rangers in Vietnam* (New York: Ivy Books, 1988), 70–71.

[58] Lanning, *Inside the LRRPs*, 47, 51–59. The terms LRP and LRRP are largely interchangeable. The initial name of provisional units was commonly Long-Range Reconnaissance Patrol Detachment. The 1967 authorization changed the names to Long Range Patrol when they became officially authorized detachments and companies. The 1969 reorganization changed the name to ranger, all from the same regiment. The doctrine titles also used both terms. This monograph uses the term LRP to refer to these units and this type of operation unless referring to a specific unit action.

[59] Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 30.

provided personnel and equipment to create a separate company to support each field force, while transitioning the provisional division and brigade units into separate companies and infantry detachments respectively.[60] On February 1, 1969 LRP companies and detachments at all levels, including two Germany-based units, inactivated and reorganized as separate companies of the 75th Infantry Regiment (Ranger). As units redeployed from Vietnam through 1973, the Ranger units inactivated, leaving only A and B Companies in the United States designated to support V and VII Corps in Europe. In 1974, those two companies inactivated on the decision to form the 1st and 2nd Ranger Battalions, with many of the personnel transferring to form the nucleus of the new ranger units.[61]

Units at all echelons used LRPs; SOF teams worked directly for MACV headquarters while each field force (FF), division, and separate brigade possessed LRP capability.[62] LRP company location varied within each unit. Often, the division cavalry squadron provided administrative control, while LRP units received operational assignments from the intelligence section.[63] A similar arrangement emerged at the brigade level, with the LRP detachment under the air cavalry troop for support and coordination of aviation assets.[64] LRP units or sections often

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[60] Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 210; Lanning, *Inside the LRRPs*, 61.

[61] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 8, 111.

[62] Joseph A. McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, Vietnam Studies (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1994), 105; Lanning, *Inside the LRRPs*, 62; Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 209. A Field Force (FF) was a corps equivalent level of command, the term being used to prevent confusion with the Corps Tactical Zones (CTZ) I-IV, geographically based areas that were also controlled by ARVN corps headquarters. I FF operated in central South Vietnam in CTZ II, while II FF operated to the south in CTZ III around the capital of Saigon. USMC forces controlled CTZ I in the north by the North Vietnamese border and ARVN forces controlled most operations in CTZ IV, the Mekong Delta south of Saigon.

[63] William R. Peers, "LRRP Briefing - Commander's Conference" (Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, Special Collection, September 24, 1967), 4; Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 62.

[64] "Operational Report - Lessons Learned (1 November 1966 - 31 January 1967), 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, February 15, 1967), Tab C, 12.

operated under the control of subordinate units based on mission requirements at the corps and division level.[65]

Doctrinally, the corps and army-level companies had three platoons of eight, five-man teams. The company totaled 230 personnel, including a communications platoon, support section with parachute riggers, and an operations section.[66] FM 31-18 described a standard team size of five personnel, subject to mission requirements: patrol leader, assistant patrol leader, two radio operators, and one scout observer.[67]

In Vietnam's operations, however, LRP structure was slightly different. The field force companies, when formed, had an authorized strength of 230 like the doctrinal company, but with six-man teams. The division and brigade level companies or detachments possessed a similar structure at the individual team level, but had fewer platoons with fewer teams, and a less robust support, communications, and headquarters section. Brigade units had 61 personnel while the division units had 118.[68] A team of four personnel—considered the minimum feasible size—sometimes conducted LRP missions. However, more often teams operated with an additional scout, increasing the team size to six personnel. Teams also often included indigenous personnel or combined into "heavy teams" if planning a deliberate ambush, prisoner capture, or similar operation.[69]

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[65] "Operational Report - Lessons Learned (1 November 1966 - 31 January 1967), 173rd Airborne Brigade (Separate)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, February 15, 1967), Tab C, 17.

[66] FM 31-18 (1965), 5–6; FM 31-18 (1968*)*, 6.

[67] FM 31-18 (1968), 7.

[68] Lanning, *Inside the LRRPs*, 211, 225.

[69] Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 20–21; George L. Mabry, "Combat Lessons Bulletin Number 4 - Ranger Operations, US Army Vietnam" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, February 23, 1970), 2.; LRP operations were predominantly, but not strictly surveillance missions. Units used LRPs to conduct deliberate offensive operations and opportunity ambushes at the end of reconnaissance or surveillance missions to fight for intelligence and disrupt enemy operations.

LRP personnel in Vietnam took nontraditional paths to train for their unit mission. The provisional units consisted initially of volunteers already assigned to subordinate units. As the units remained and individuals rotated on tours, replacements included a mix of experienced soldiers and raw recruits. FM 31-18 suggested a timeline of "8 months to produce a long-range patrol"—an unachievable goal for units with personnel who rotated individually every 12 months.[70] LRP training was a continuous internal program within each organization. After completing individual and collective training, units would then use progressively more difficult combat patrols to build the new soldiers' experience and capability. To augment raw recruits, units took in as many repeat tour personnel and Ranger School graduates as possible. Soldiers ideally attended the MACV Recondo School before assignment as a team leader or assistant team leader.[71]

LRP units in Vietnam largely used the same materiel as regular infantry units, except for those items used for insertion or extraction at extremely small landing zones, or where landing zones did not exist. The individual weapons varied greatly based on availability at each unit and on the specific mission. Most LRP units preferred a carbine version of the M16, but many personnel carried an AK-47 as their primary weapon. LRP teams typically only carried a machine gun if the patrol planned to conduct a deliberate ambush. Patrols used claymore mines both for perimeter security and for ambushes.[72] Doctrine called for use of a continuous wave (CW) radio by patrol in burst or manual mode to communicate to higher and a shorter range frequency modulation (FM) radio for internal team use.[73] However, due to a lack of proficiency with the CW radio, most patrols used the AN/PRC-25 FM radio with a nominal five-mile range for

[70] FM 31-18 (1965*)*, 24.

[71] Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 20–21, 316.

[72] Mabry, "Ranger Operations," 4.

[73] FM 31-18 (1968), 10.

internal and external communications and relayed through aircraft or forward radio stations as necessary.[74]

LRP Employment and Effects

LRP teams conducted very small-scale tactical actions whose individual results and aggregation of patterns developed significant information at the upper tactical and operational levels. Senior leaders in multiple after-action reviews credited these long-range patrols with developing the information that drove major operations. I Field Force Commander Lieutenant General Peers stated at the Long-Range Patrol Conference in August 1968 that "In 1967…every major battle that the 4th Infantry Division got itself into was initiated by the action of a LRP. Every single one of them."[75] In his Vietnam Studies monograph, *Tactical and Material Innovations,* US Army Lieutenant General Hay, a division and field force commander, also noted the significance of LRPs through their increasing frequency of use and effects at the division and higher level.[76]

Operation Cedar Falls in January 1967 is one example. Beginning in late 1966, MACV conducted Operation Rendezvous, a comprehensive plan for intelligence collection and pattern analysis. It included all means of information collection, including agent reports, overhead infrared collection, airborne radar, radio direction finding equipment, and long-range patrols to feed a pattern analysis of enemy activity. The MACV intelligence officer, Brigadier General Joseph McChristian, used this information to conclude that a strike in the Iron Triangle area of military region IV would severely disrupt enemy operations.[77] Operation Cedar Falls led to a

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[74] Peers, "LRRP Briefing - Commander's Conference," 6–7; Mabry, "Ranger Operations," 4.

[75] William R. Peers et al., "USARV Long-Range Patrol Conference Summary, United States Army Vietnam," ed. Frank H Linnell (Combined Arms Research Library, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, Special Collection, August 9, 1968), 12.

[76] John H. Hay, Jr., *Tactical and Material Innovations*, Vietnam Studies (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 123.

[77] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 18–19.

significant setback for both North Vietnamese and Vietcong operations.[78] In particular, both US Army and Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN) troops found that the enemy locations plotted using pattern analysis prediction correlated very closely with the actual locations discovered during the operation, with 156 of 177 predicted enemy locations in the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment's (ACR) area found within 500m of the predicted position.[79] While multiple assets enabled achieving this success, it would have been significantly less effective without LRP teams because of the key role they played in the intelligence collection.

The 101st ABD and 1st Cavalry Division (CD) operations integrated LRP operations with their companies attached to the division air cavalry squadrons, 2nd Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment and 1st Squadron, 9th Cavalry Regiment. The senior officer debriefings of Major Generals Melvin Zais, John Hennessey, and John Wright, the three 101st ABD commanding generals from July 1968 to January 1971, all mention significant contributions to success by LRP and Ranger units.[80] Similarly, 1st CD used their LRP company in conjunction with their division reconnaissance squadron assets to pull subordinate brigades into an area for operations. Major General Roberts, the commanding general from April 1969 to May 1970, outlined use of H Co (Ranger), 75th Infantry in detail combined with the scout helicopters, lift helicopters, and aero-rifle platoons of 1-9th Cavalry to pinpoint enemy supply lines along trail networks. The division

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[78] McChristian, *The Role of Military Intelligence 1965-1967*, 124–25.

[79] Bernard William Rogers, *Cedar Falls-Junction City: A Turning Point*, Vietnam Studies (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1989), 18.

[80] Melvin Zais, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report - MG Melvin Zais, CG 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), Period 19 July 1968 - 25 May 1969, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, May 25, 1969), 14; John J. Hennessy, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report - MG John J. Hennessy, CG 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), Period 19700525-19710115, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, January 15, 1971), 3, 4, 23; John M. Wright, Jr., "Senior Officer Debriefing Report - MG John M. Wright, Jr., CG 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile), Period 15 May 1969 to 25 May 1970, Headquarters, 101st Airborne Division (Airmobile)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, May 11, 1970), 14, 15, 17, 29; S. H. Matheson, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report - BG S.H. Matheson, CG 1-101st Airborne Division, Period 15 March 1967 to 2 March 1968, Headquarters, 1st Brigade, 101st Airborne Division" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, March 2, 1968), E-2.

committed battalions and brigades based on that reconnaissance to disrupt enemy supply operations, attack uncommitted forces, etc. in the Phuoc Long province.[81] Both units reported LRPs enabling disruption of large-scale enemy attacks and integration with other technical reconnaissance measures.[82]

LRP operational success varied based on their position relative to enemy units. If dismounted patrols were close to friendly lines, near the enemy's known line of contact, they found enemy forces in a very high state of alert, and thus greatly increased the risk of friendly unit compromise and mission failure. However, when patrols infiltrated what current doctrine calls the enemy's support area, enemy units were much less alert, and the patrols had much more freedom of maneuver, time, and ability to collect useful intelligence.[83]

In both unit employment and in the conduct of individual operations, LRP units often conducted missions other than reconnaissance or surveillance. Especially later in the conflict, and after the name change from LRP to Ranger, the units conducted more offensive, deliberate ambush operations as the purpose for the patrol, rather than as an opportunity taken close to the planned extraction time. These missions sometimes grew even beyond the "heavy team" into full platoon or company sized operations. Given their association with the air cavalry units, LRP units also commonly served as a downed aircraft reaction team or as pathfinders for airborne and air assault operations.[84]

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[81] Elvy B. Roberts, "Senior Officer Debriefing Report - MG Elvy B. Roberts, CG 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile), Period 23 April 1969 to 5 May 1970, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, April 18, 1970), 6–7.

[82] Ibid., 9; Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 78; "Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 31 October 1969, Headquarters, 1st Cavalry Division (Airmobile)" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, November 15, 1969), 75; "Operational Report for Quarterly Period Ending 30 April 1967, Headquarters, II Field Force Vietnam" (Center for Army Lessons Learned, Ft. Leavenworth, KS, May 15, 1967), 41.

[83] Gary Linderer, *Black Berets and Painted Faces: The Story of a LRP in Vietnam* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday Book & Music Clubs, 1991), 277; Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 89.

[84] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 51.

Commanders at all echelons generally supported the idea of LRPs. They resourced them appropriately with personnel and other assets needed for successful operations like aviation, sometimes assuming significant risk in their employment. In several instances, enemy forces eliminated entire teams, with all personnel killed or captured. While LRP recruiters at replacement depots advertised that the individual LRP mission was less risky than being a line infantryman, the risk of catastrophic danger to a team was far higher.[85] If circumstances delayed or made unavailable indirect fire support, a reaction force, or helicopter gunship support, a small recon team could do little to mitigate the risk. While this situation was not a common occurrence, nor something deliberately planned, it was a risk that high-level commanders accepted when conducting these operations. [86] The support varied between units and even within units as commanders changed, but it remained generally positive.

Analysis and Conclusions

Analyzing LRP operations in Vietnam against the fundamentals of reconnaissance reveals their operations most significantly impacted gain and maintain enemy contact, maintain freedom of maneuver, and focus on the reconnaissance objective. Adherence to these fundamentals of reconnaissance enabled all aspects of effective reconnaissance management. Without the options LRPs provided, reconnaissance management would have been much less effective.

A significant contribution, particularly early in the conflict, was the ability for LRPs to collect information about the enemy movement in areas where conventional unit action would not suffice and the US Army had not yet developed reliable technology-based means. Organic conventional reconnaissance units did not have the equipment nor organization to conduct the

[85] Linderer, *Black Berets*, 10.

[86] Stanton, *Rangers at War*, 139, 142, 315, 80–86.

extended foot patrolling required to gain and maintain enemy contact in the dense vegetation of Vietnam.[87] LRP units provided this essential capability to US forces in Vietnam.

LRPs also had a significant impact in maintaining freedom of maneuver for the supported force. As described by General Roberts, the use of 1-9th Cavalry with the LRP or Ranger unit attached allowed the 1st CD to maintain most forces out of contact at fire support bases or conducting local security and stability missions in their area of operations. When their reconnaissance—combined with intelligence and other assets—provided information on the movement of enemy units or supplies, the division had the flexibility to position its main combat units to conduct the attack. Reconnaissance by main force units would likely have been less effective and reduced flexibility.

LRPs had mixed results within the fundamental focus on the reconnaissance objective. One could argue that the deliberate ambush and larger size unit operations misused the capability or showed proper mixing in methods of employment needed to obtain necessary information. The use of LRPs in non-reconnaissance or surveillance missions, such as downed aircraft recovery, does violate this principle, but understandably so. The LRPs were an available and capable force used to achieve a necessary task. Viewing this principle as an absolute, that use of LRPs for anything but a stealthy surveillance patrol is a misuse of the organization, is an unachievable, unrealistic extreme.

The most significant impact in the framework used for this analysis is the LRP's ability to provide flexibility in conducting effective management of reconnaissance. As discussed in the case study, LRPs were most effective when used in conjunction with other methods and means of reconnaissance. LRPs provided a critical ability to verify reports from emerging technology such as the "people sniffer," infrared sensors, and ground radar reports. LRPs often emplaced these technical assets, later cueing their own reconnaissance missions. LRP operations further cued

[87] Ibid., 30.

operations by a localized reaction force or collectively larger scale battalion and brigade operations. The ability to cue, mix, and provide redundancy to other reconnaissance operations was the greatest contribution of the LRP units in Vietnam.

Four major factors contributed to LRP success in Vietnam: they occupied optimal locations relative to the enemy's battlefield framework; terrain and the character of the enemy created a dense battlefield favorable for their use; the tempo of the conflict allowed the time necessary for stealthy reconnaissance operations to gain necessary information; and the chain of command at the highest echelons resourced their formation appropriately and deemed the inherent risk acceptable. LRP use in the Vietnam conflict represents a high point in the breadth and depth of stealthy reconnaissance use and integration at all echelons from battalion to corps. It provides many templates for what is necessary for their effective formation and employment. The remarks of Colonel Aaron at the 1968 LRP Conference, displayed in the epigraph, best summarize utility of these patrols in Vietnam: no matter what new technology comes along, at some point a force may have the need to insert ground assets to cover gaps in capability and coverage. [88]

Case Study 2: Long-Range Surveillance Units in ODS/OIF I

Dedicated dismounted reconnaissance units for the EAB returned to the US Army as part of the transition to AirLand Battle doctrine that evolved in the 1970s and 1980s.[89] These units looked much like the LRP units of the Vietnam war, but had broadened in their designed capabilities and purpose to enable the deep disruptive fight US Army leaders envisioned necessary to defeat a Soviet offensive in Europe. The reconstituted reconnaissance force participated in numerous actions, spanning a spectrum from close alignment with the doctrinal

[88] Peers et al., "USARV Long-Range Patrol Conference Summary, United States Army Vietnam," 15. COL Aaron was the 5th SFG Commander who ran the MACV Recondo School that many LRP/Ranger soldiers attended.

[89] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 113.

mission to no alignment at all. Examples include: the provisional LRS platoon from the 82nd ABD participated in the 1983 action in Grenada; in 1991, Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm employed multiple LRSCs and LRSDs; the V Corps LRSC deployed to Bosnia in 1996 and Kosovo in 2000; and US forces fighting the Global War on Terror in both Iraq and Afghanistan included LRSCs and LRSDs.[90] This analysis focuses on the larger-scale conventional operations in Iraq, both in 1990-91 and 2003, as these most closely address the elements germane to a division or corps deep fight in a peer or near-peer conflict.

DOTMLPF-P Summary

LRSU doctrine focused on the intelligence collection function. Gebhardt described the initial FM 7-93 as "an artful amalgamation of the USAREUR-derived LRP doctrine of the early 1960s with the TTP gained from the experience of the Vietnam War, applied to a target- and concealment-rich linear battlefield deep in the geographical sense."[91] The imperative pervasive throughout the doctrine was collection of intelligence and not deliberate offensive operations that characterized many LRP actions in Vietnam.[92] The 1984 operational concept coined the name surveillance unit deliberately to make this distinction.[93] Both the 1987 and 1995 editions of FM 7-93 emphasized this purpose by placing the direct-action missions as the role of special forces and ranger units, not LRSU.[94] The organization of the new LRSU in the 1984 operational concept placed the units organic to the corps and division cavalry squadrons. However, the eventual

[90] Robert L. Chamberlain and Ralph Kluna, "Long-Range Surveillance Operations In Kosovo-Complementing Existing Capabilities.," *Military Intelligence Professional Bulletin* 27, no. 1 (January 1, 2001): 47; Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 3, 120, 140.

[91] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 117. USAREUR is the acronym for US Army Europe

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid., 112.

[94] US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 7-93, Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1987), 1–2; US Department of the Army, Field Manual (FM) 7-93, Long-Range Surveillance Unit Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1995), 1–2.

organization of the corps LRSC and division LRSD as organic to the corps military intelligence brigade and division military intelligence battalion reinforced the emphasis on intelligence collection vice combat action.[95]

The expected area of employment for LRS units was again the "area of interest" 50 or 150 kilometers forward of the forward line of troops (FLOT) for the division or corps respectively. This complemented other collection systems and avoided contact with enemy forces and local civilians.[96] The doctrine recognized the helicopter as the primary and most common method of insertion, but also accounted for other airborne, amphibious, ground, or stay-behind methods.[97] The 1995 edition of the manual expanded the detail of each method and added sections on vehicle movement, personnel selection, and operations other than war.[98]

The basic team organization was still six personnel: infantry soldiers for the team leader, assistant team leader, and three scouts, and a signal soldier as a radio operator.[99] LRSU Platoons each had six teams. Division LRSDs had one patrol platoon with headquarters and communications sections while the corps LRSC had three patrol platoons with full headquarters and communications platoons.[100]

As in Vietnam, provisional units preceded officially authorized units; in this case, the 9th ID and the 82nd ABD. Initially, two corps fielded LRSCs and all eighteen divisions formed LRSDs in the late 1980s. As part of the post-ODS force drawdown, heavy division LRSDs inactivated and remaining LRSUs realigned to support different headquarters.[101] This force

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[95] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 112; FM 7-93 (1987), 1–2.

[96] FM 7-93 (1987), 1–2.

[97] Ibid., 3–6.

[98] FM 7-93 (1995), iv.

[99] Thomas M. Jordan, "Improving the Division LRSU," *Infantry* 80, no. 1 (February 1990): 11–12.

[100] FM 7-93 (1995), 1–6, 1–8.

[101] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 135.

structure remained largely the same until 2009, when all LRSDs inactivated and LRSCs organized under BFSBs, including all reserve component units.[102]

As in the first case study, the training and personnel aspects are closely linked. The personnel for the LRSU were largely second assignment soldiers, drawn through internal unit selection processes unique to each installation with a LRSU. This created varying difficulty in recruiting personnel based on the available population. Units such as those at Ft. Hood and in Europe with large mechanized forces did not have a large pool of light infantry soldiers to draw from.[103] These units successfully cross trained mechanized and anti-armor infantrymen, among others, but it was one more hurdle to overcome.[104] There was some use of the Q6, which later became the 6B, skill identifier to identify LRS personnel trained for these units, but stability and repeat assignments were not guaranteed.[105] The manning of these units was also subject to the level of emphasis the senior commander placed on allowing the desired type of personnel outlined in the doctrine to be made available for the LRSUs—prior successful company commanders, platoon leaders, scouts, and other specialties who were de facto if not de jure leaders in the larger units. Concentrating this quality of personnel in one location could not but help but lower the proficiency of the larger general population units.

While LRSUs benefited from the establishment of the Long-Range Surveillance Leaders Course (LRSLC), later renamed the (still existing) Reconnaissance and Surveillance Leaders Course (RSLC), they had difficulty maintaining the specialized insertion skills called for by doctrine. This difficulty primarily manifested in dive and military free-fall (MFF) parachute

[102] FM 3-55.93, 1–7.

[103] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 121.

[104] Jordan, "Improving the Division LRSU," 11.

[105] Gary Fox, "Interview by Author with Mr. Gary Fox, Office of the Chief of Infantry, United States Army Infantry School, Maneuver Center of Excellence, Ft. Benning, GA," Telephone, December 8, 2017; Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 124.

proficiency, but also in overall team proficiency. Eventually, the US Army removed the dive insertion method because the units could not maintain certified dive masters to maintain a baseline of proficiency. A combination of factors caused this inability, including personnel turnover and longevity, and a variance caused by unit proximity to facilities and equipment to train in these skills conventional forces, unlike SOF, do not typically employ.[106]

During the buildup of Operation Desert Shield and prior to the invasion of Operation Iraqi Freedom, LRSU conducted significant training to adapt their techniques to the desert environment. The 82nd ABD LRSD in Operation Desert Storm, F Troop (LRS), 1st Squadron, 17th Cavalry, was the first on the ground with a portion of the initial "line in the sand" brigade from the 82nd ABD. The unit immediately set about adjusting their techniques to the unexpected terrain, developing new hide site construction methods that they shared with other LRSU as they arrived.[107] Prior to OIF I, V Corps conducted multiple pre-mission training rotations to Kuwait for E Company, 51st Infantry (LRS).[108] Despite the less than ideal terrain, they were able to adapt techniques and obtain some success in their reconnaissance and surveillance mission.

LRSU Employment and Effects

Some consider Operation Desert Storm as the culmination and validation of the AirLand Battle Doctrine revolution that began in the 1970s and came to fruition in the 1980s.[109] Since the recreation of LRSUs was part of this doctrinal revolution, it is logical to examine LRSU

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[106] Fox, "Interview by Author with Mr. Gary Fox"; Meadows, "Long-Range Surveillance Unit Force Structure in Force XXI," 49–51.

[107] Mark S. Leslie, "E Troop 1/17 Cavalry, Long Range Surveillance Troop (LRST), 82nd Airborne Division's Training and Operations During Operations Desert Shield / Desert Storm" (United States Army Infantry Center, Donovan Research Library, ICCC Monograph Collection, 2000), 10, accessed November 30, 2017, http://www.benning.army.mil/library/content/Virtual/Donovanpapers/other/STUP5/LeslieMarkS%201LT.pdf.

[108] Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, *On Point*, 68.

[109] Robert Scales, *Certain Victory: The US Army in the Gulf War* (Washington, DC: Office of the Chief of Staff, US Army, 1993), 35–36.

performance in ODS. LRSU operations divided in two categories based on the decisions of the two corps commanders, LTG Gary Luck commanding XVIII ABC, and LTG Frederick Franks commanding VII Corps. The VII Corps largely did not employ the LRSUs in accordance with doctrine, while XVIII ABC did. This variation was due to differences in commander personality, level of comfort with the mission profile, and the size of the assigned areas. Both commanders made decisions with risk as a significant factor: General Luck's guidance was to use the corps and division LRSU only if needed information was unobtainable by other means, while General Franks decided not to attempt any cross-FLOT ground reconnaissance missions with LRSU.[110] LRSU employment had mixed results. It generated no spectacular successes but provided solid intelligence in some cases, while there were also outright failures to achieve necessary information in others.

The XVIII ABC possessed five LRS organizations in ODS: each subordinate division had its LRSD organic to either the military intelligence battalion or cavalry squadron. The corps lacked an organic LRSC and received the LRSD from the inactivating 2nd Armored Division (AD), D/522nd MI BN. The LRSDs from the 101st ABD and 24th Infantry Division (ID) both conducted successful cross-FLOT reconnaissance missions onto initial objectives. They communicated effectively, using high frequency radios to both division and brigade headquarters, and provided effective surveillance on initial cross border objectives for the 24 to 48 hours before the invasion. These units were overtaken by advancing forces and had no opportunity for reinsertion due to the rate of advance.[111] The 82nd ABD LRSD, F Troop, 1-17th Cavalry, acted in support of squadron operations with downed aircraft recovery, damage assessment of Talil

[110] Charles Lane Toomey, *XVIII Airborne Corps in Desert Storm, From Planning to Victory* (Central Point, OR: Hellgate Press, 2004), 293; Stephen A. Bourque, *JAYHAWK: The VII Corps in the Persian Gulf War*, CMH Publication 70-73-1 (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2002), 204; Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 131.

[111] Toomey, *XVIII ABC in Desert Storm*, 293; Richard M. Swain, *"Lucky War" Third Army in Desert Storm* (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: US Army Command and Staff College Press, 1994), 206–7.

airbase, and surveillance of pro and anti-Saddam forces in An Nasariya.[112] The 24th ID and 101st ABD teams avoided compromise and provided positive communications on Iraqi units back to their respective brigades and divisions, proving successful but not spectacularly so.[113]

The XVIII ABC LRSD failed to obtain coverage in the necessary period to provide early warning of an Iraqi advance. Three teams inserted beyond division LRSD teams. In two cases Bedouins compromised the teams, and Iraqi soldiers compromised the third, forcing extraction less than 24 hours after insertion. These teams were not in place in the window expected for Iraqi movement south, 24 to 48 hours after the XVIII ABC attack.[114] Five US Army Special Forces teams inserted eight observation posts even deeper than the corps LRSU. They faced similar compromise issues that forced extractions; of the eight, only three remained in operation over 24 hours. They were however, in place long enough to confirm that Iraqi strategic reinforcement was not moving south from Baghdad.[115]

VII Corps employed LRSUs in relatively close border security missions prior to the ground invasion. In accordance with the corps commander's guidance, it did not reinsert them across the border prior to the ground invasion. Poor communications with adjacent units plagued the operations of F/51st Infantry, the VII Corps LRSC, and D/101st Military Intelligence Battalion, the 1st ID LRSD. The observation posts emplaced were within visual range of the main units, causing multiple instances of confusion between LRSUs moving and potential Iraqi army forces, creating conditions for fratricide. [116] This employment of LRSUs in a non-doctrinal

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[112] Leslie, "E Troop 1/17 Cavalry, LRST in ODS," 11.

[113] Toomey, *XVIII ABC in Desert Storm*, 294.

[114] Toomey, *XVIII ABC in Desert Storm*, 294–5.

[115] Scales, *Certain Victory*, 196–7; Toomey, *XVIII ABC in Desert Storm*, 299.

[116] Stephen A. Bourque and John W. Burdan III, *The Road to Safwan: The 1st Squadron, 4th Cavalry in the 1991 Persian Gulf War* (Denton, TX: University of North Texas Press, 2007), 76, 84.

manner, within visual range of the FLOT, created unresolved communication and coordination issues.

Despite the less than spectacular successes, much of the after-action review comments advocated retention of the capability and modification to its organization. Likely from the use and coordination issues experienced, coupled with the unexpectedly rapid rate of advance, common suggestions were to move the LRSU from the military intelligence unit to the division cavalry squadron or corps cavalry regiment and to eliminate the LRSD from the heavy divisions.[117] At least one heavy division commander, Major General McCaffrey of the 24th ID, objected to the deactivation of the LRSD after Desert Storm.[118] Most of the LRSUs actually conducted operations under the corps or division reconnaissance unit, but were temporarily attached and neither had great experience working with the other. The 82nd and 101st ABD LRSUs had garrison relationships with the cavalry squadrons, 1-17th Cavalry and 2-17th Cavalry respectively. D Company (LRS),101st Military Intelligence Battalion, conducted most operations under the control of 1-4th Cavalry, the division cavalry squadron for 1st ID. However, the more successful heavy division LRSD, D Company (LRS), 124th Military Intelligence Battalion of the 24th ID, operated directly through the division G2 and used the SOF experience of the assistant division commander to develop and employ teams against targets.[119] F Company, 51st Infantry (LRS), the VII Corps LRSC, operated under 2nd ACR. [120]

Ten years later, part two of the Persian Gulf War in the form of Operation Iraqi Freedom had similarly mixed results. The Coalition force employed LRSUs in two areas during the 2003 invasion. One supported the 3rd ID attack north from Kuwait in advance of the attack. The

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[117] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 153 n 92.

[118] Anders, "LRSU Application in JV 2010," 10.

[119] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 128–9.

[120] Ibid., 131–4.

second supported the 173rd Airborne Brigade airborne assault into Bashur airfield in a pathfinder type role.[121]

3rd ID attacked north to Baghdad and employed the attached corps LRSC, E Company, 51st Infantry(LRS). Three teams inserted on Objective Rams, southwest of the city of Najaf, which was two-thirds of the distance between Kuwait and Bagdad. E/51st IN was organic to the 165th MI BN, part of the V Corps MI brigade. V Corps inserted the teams early in the morning of G-Day and expected them to be in place for the 48 hours it expected 3rd ID to need to advance that far. Of the three teams inserted, enemy forces compromised one team within hours, forcing it to break contact to an alternate hide site, concealing themselves in a ditch for 48 hours with Iraqi soldiers actively searching for them within ten feet of their location. The other two teams successfully established observation posts and communicated Iraqi unit locations to the advancing 3rd ID.[122] The rate of advance was much faster than expected: the division cavalry squadron, 3-7th Cavalry, reached Objective Rams on G+1 and linked up with the teams.[123] The speed of advance and length of the planning cycle for insertion of 48 to 72 hours precluded any subsequent use of the LRS teams in the south in their doctrinal surveillance role.[124]

The 74th Infantry Detachment (LRS), organic to the 173rd Airborne Brigade, supported the airborne assault into Bashur air base. Their initial role, supporting the brigade S-1 and enabled by attached air force combat control personnel, was to form the drop zone support team necessary for the airborne operation to take place.[125] The team air landed into the airfield the night prior to

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[121] Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, *On Point*, 162, 225.

[122] Ibid., 162–64, 456.

[123] Jim Lacey, *Takedown: The 3rd Infantry Division's Twenty-One Day Assault on Baghdad* (Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2007), 62.

[124] Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, *On Point*, 164.

[125] Matthew J. Konz, "Operational Employment of the Airborne Brigade Combat Team: The 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment as a Case Study" (School of Advanced Military Studies, US Army Command and General Staff College, 2009), 45. The 173rd Airborne Brigade had designated the S1 as the drop zone support team leader (DZSTL) for the operation

the airborne assault on March 25th, 2003, linking up with a Special Forces team already on the ground. They established communications and verified weather conditions for successful execution of the assault.[126] Over the days and weeks following the airborne assault, the 74th Infantry Detachment integrated into reconnaissance operations as the airhead expanded, using their long-range communications capability to assist in command and control of the brigade in the mountainous terrain.[127]

Analysis and Conclusions

Examining deep dismounted reconnaissance actions in ODS and OIF I reveal them as a necessary capability with an important role, even though they were not a clearly decisive factor to operational success. The salient fundamentals of reconnaissance for this case study are to gain and maintain enemy contact, retain freedom of maneuver, report information rapidly and accurately, develop the situation rapidly, and orient on the reconnaissance objective. Within the management of reconnaissance, all three elements of mixing, cueing, and redundancy are germane. The difference in employment and effectiveness between the two corps areas in Operation Desert Storm also provides opportunities for contrast.

In maintain continuous reconnaissance and maintain enemy contact, despite reservations especially expressed in ODS, commanders had information requirements other means could not better or sufficiently meet. Even though RPAs were available in Desert Storm, and even more so in Iraqi Freedom, they were in limited supply. This limited their ability to provide continuous coverage to those reconnaissance objectives that required it, such as the 24th ID G-Day objectives in Desert Storm or Objective Rams in Iraqi Freedom. In both cases, advancing forces moved quicker than expected, preventing reinsertion following initial objectives.

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[126] Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, *On Point*, 225.

[127] Ibid., 230; Blair Ross, "A Transformed Force in Legacy Clothing," *Infantry* 92, no. 2 (Winter 2003): 8.

On the other hand, LRSUs had issues with reporting information rapidly and accurately, most notably during the VII Corps border security missions prior to the Desert Storm ground invasion with 1-4th Cavalry and 2nd ACR. There were also successes with the 24th ID and 101st ABD in their G-Day objectives, units whose headquarters planned effectively for LRS employment from the outset. An aspect of LRS employment apparent in the Desert Storm accounts is the variance in use according to the level of knowledge and comfort by the commanders. XVIII ABC, and 24th ID, even though they were a heavy unit, made much more deliberate and doctrinal use of the LRS units than did VII Corps. This was also partly due to the much greater terrain in the west assigned to XVIII ABC, but also due to the background of the leaders and varying knowledge and comfort with this type of operation.

Under orient on the reconnaissance objective, commanders employed LRSUs outside their primary doctrinal surveillance role. In OIF I, it was effectively so in another task outlined in FM 7-93, as a pathfinder unit for an airborne operation. On the other end of the spectrum, some headquarters in both conflicts employed LRSUs in a manner not leveraging any of their unique capabilities, riding in trucks along the advance and securing prisoners of war in ODS as one example.[128]

A factor in the non-doctrinal employment of LRSUs was commanders' decreasing tolerance for risk. Lesser confidence in team and staff proficiency, disadvantageous terrain, and other needs that the units were available to fulfill influenced this trend. The LRSUs of the Cold-War and later era were a conventionally-owned and resourced unit whose doctrine called for SOF type techniques. Without the specialized manning and training procedures available to SOF, and dispersion over a wide area that prevented a critical mass of expertise to form. These units faced an uphill battle to maintain proficiency that ebbed and flowed in the level of success attained and

[128] Gebhardt, *Eyes Behind the Lines*, 131.

was highly dependent on leader knowledge and support of their operations. In the OIF I examination *On Point*, Fontenot et al conclude "the Army should assess long-range surveillance units…did not produce great effect for the investment of talent and the risk to those involved." [129] They speculate there may be nothing unsound with LRSU structure and organization, but leaders are unwilling to accept the risk posed by using these "fragile units" in "fast-moving, ambiguous situations."[130]

In the management of reconnaissance, dismounted reconnaissance still provided a needed capability. The persistent surveillance emplaced on high priority locations enabled other asset, such as RPAs, availability for other missions. Dismounted reconnaissance enabled the art of management in mixing, cueing, and redundancy.

Cross-Case Analysis

Several continuities emerged through the examination both case studies through the framework of reconnaissance fundamentals and reconnaissance management techniques. These continuities fall into three categories: the requirement for options to enable reconnaissance management, the decrease in risk acceptable in operations, the requirements for a dismounted reconnaissance organization to mitigate risk, and limited SOF capacity to support conventional units. These continuities show the need and necessary form for a dismounted reconnaissance force to operate in the EAB deep area.

The first continuity emerging is no single method or type of reconnaissance can meet all information requirements. Both case studies show that integration of all methods and forms of reconnaissance enabled success in the deep area. Future operations may require all forms and methods even while terrain and tempo considerations make each more useful in specific circumstances. The restricted terrain gave dismounted reconnaissance a dominant role in Vietnam

[129] Fontenot, Degen, and Tohn, *On Point*, 423.

[130] Ibid.

while the open terrain of the Iraqi desert drove an operational tempo dictating increased use of aerial assets and fighting for information. In neither case, however, was the role so dominant as to eliminate the need for the other.

The second continuity is circumstances enabling successful execution of deep, stealthy reconnaissance declined. Specifically, using Taylor's language, operational tempo increased due to the open terrain but without a corresponding increase in acceptable risk, lowering the "stealth threshold." However, battlefield density has not decreased, but increased, and therefore aerial reconnaissance is unable to meet all requirements. There is tension between the need for detailed information only available through dismounted reconnaissance and the level of acceptable risk.

The third continuity is mitigating the risk of dismounted operations requires significant and specialized resource application. Successful dismounted reconnaissance requires selectivity in personnel beyond initial-level training, especially in a deep area, and significant, if not dedicated, support assets from aviation and artillery to mitigate the risk. The personnel of successful dismounted reconnaissance units are not initial-entry soldiers, but those demonstrating the necessary mental and physical capacity to accomplish a high-risk mission. The specialized assets are not typically available in sufficient quantity at the brigade level to permit successful mitigation.

The last continuity is requirements exceeded the capacity of SOF dedicated to supporting conventional units. In all three conflicts, SOF operated near and coordinated with conventional force headquarters, but had a different mission focus that precluded their focus on information and other requirements for the conventional force. This led to the creation of conventional units for this mission in Vietnam and their employment in both ODS and OIF I.

Conclusion

Based on these continuities, the conventional EAB headquarters should have the ability to employ stealthy, dismounted reconnaissance in the deep area to enable proper management of reconnaissance assets and execution within the fundamentals of reconnaissance. Future

operations in restricted terrain such as those in the Pacific or Africa, much closer to the terrain examined in the Vietnam case study, may require increase the need for this capability. Two broad options are available to fill this capability gap: modify the conventional force structure or increasing interoperability with similarly capable SOF units. This capability exists within SOF, but at insufficient capacity. It also exists in the IBCT, but insufficient resourcing of personnel, training, and equipment make employment of this force in the EAB deep area likely unacceptable. The recommendations to address this discrepancy are twofold: re-creation of a conventional EAB dismounted reconnaissance force and a new occupational specialty to fill dismounted reconnaissance at all echelons.

The Dismounted Cavalry Troop – Can It Fill the Gap?

A unit like the inactivated LRSCs remains in the conventional force—the DCT organic to the reconnaissance squadron of the IBCT. The doctrine of this unit has lost its uniqueness over the last few years, consolidating into one manual with doctrine for the motorized and mechanized cavalry troops found elsewhere in the IBCT, the SBCT, and the ABCT. The scout platoon doctrine underwent a similar consolidation into one manual.[131] This consolidation and subsequent view of these units ignores the historical continuities about dismounted reconnaissance revealed in this monograph. The doctrine views these units as all appropriate for initial entry soldiers, going against the historical trend of growing infantry reconnaissance units from within organizations with personnel demonstrating the appropriate mental and physical aptitude. The level of selectivity and training focus for the DCT varies greatly based on the unit: some have

[131] US Department of the Army, *FM 3-55.93*, 1–2; US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-20.97, Cavalry Troop* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016); US Department of the Army, *Army Techniques Publication (ATP) 3-21.98, Reconnaissance Platoon* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2013); US Department of the Army, *Army Tactics, Techniques, & Procedures (ATTP) 3-20.97, Dismount Reconnaissance Troop* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2010).

selection processes and others assign soldiers straight from initial-entry training.[132] Employment trends at the CTCs show the inability of the DCT to be task organized from a brigade and employed in a LRSU like manner in the EAB deep area.[133] Modification of doctrine and personnel practice for the DCT could make it a feasible option for employment in the EAB deep area, but doing so would deprive the brigade of reconnaissance assets needed for its own operations.

USMC Reconnaissance Unit Structure – A Model for the US Army?

The Unites States Marine Corps (USMC) offers another perspective of the reconnaissance debate. While not wholely transferable due to their different mission, the institutional structure and history of their reconnaissance organizations do account much better for the continuities of dismounted reconnaissance. Each US Marine division has a reconnaissance battalion with three reconnaissance companies and a force reconnaissance company similar in organization to US Army LRSU. The force reconnaissance company typically supports the Marine Expeditionary Force(MEF), a corps level command, while the other three companies support the division or the subordinate regiments. Like the armor and light armored vehicle units augmenting the Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Ground Combat Element (GCE) at various echelons, these units task organize appropriately to conduct these missions. A critical difference in the USMC is that the personnel in these reconnaissance companies are a separate occupational specialty, open to all Marines for application after one year in service. Institutional structure then keeps them in this career field, maintaining proficiency and mitigating risk.[134] The

[132] Graham Williams and Brian Baumgartner, "The Dismounted Recon Troop: A Relevant Force for the IBCT," *Infantry* 105, no. 3 (December 2016): 22–25.

[133] "Why Cavalry Squadrons Fail at JRTC, and the TTPs We Need to Win." (Task Force 4, Operations Group, Joint Readiness Training Center, Ft. Polk LA, September 13, 2017). Document provided by email correspondence with JRTC Task Force 4.

[134] US Department of the Navy, Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 1-10.1, Organization of the United States Marine Corps (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2017); US Department of the Navy, Marine Corps Reference Publication (MCRP) 2-10A.6, Ground Reconnaissance

USMC recently reemphasized force reconnaissance companies after the depletion of their ranks in the initial creation of the Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC) units. The MEF did not receive the needed level of reconnaissance support from MARSOC units under the US Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) umbrella.[135]

Recommendations

Due to SOF capacity restrictions, the ideal solution is that the conventional force has an organic unit capable of the dismounted reconnaissance or surveillance mission. The recommendations to execute this are creation of a consolidated battalion sized dismount reconnaissance organization and institutionalization of dismount reconnaissance specialization as an occupational specialty in a manner like the Marine Corps. These actions will increase the capability of units, more effectively mitigate risk, make their employment more likely, and thus better enable options for effective reconnaissance management.

A consolidated force dedicated to the mission of dismounted enables training and management of the most proficient force which is then most able to mitigate the risk of its employment. Consolidation is necessary because it best enables the management of unique resources to maintain certain skills, free fall parachuting as an example. Consolidation also enables more uniform of certification on the reconnaissance skills, not just the insertion methods. It would also enable better personnel management and career development of personnel as linked to the other recommendation, the creation of a dismounted reconnaissance MOS (Military Occupational Specialty) for this unit and the IBCT infantry battalion scout platoons and dismounted cavalry troop.

Operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 2016); Albert Cole Nowicki, "United States Marine Corps Basic Reconnaissance Course: Predictors of Success" (Naval Postgraduate School, 2017).

[135] Fowler, Fitzgerald, and Rose, "Retaining Army National Guard Long Range Surveillance Companies," 4.

The size of this force could be a battalion or a small brigade, depending on the relationship to and corresponding size of the reserve component force created. Recommendations in 2015 based on operational tempo were for three active LRSCs and six reserve component LRSCs to enable sustainable support to a three corps, ten division force.[136] An active component O-6 level commander, with two or three multi-component battalions and companies with duty station consolidation at least at the battalion level, would be ideal to support necessary training and oversight for this size force. A minimum size would be a single, all active-duty battalion. The US Army should create this unit at either Ft. Bragg to best integrate with already existing USASOC training infrastructure or Ft. Campbell to align with aviation support assets which are most proficient and knowledgeable in the unique insertion and extraction methods historically used by such units.

The second recommendation is the creation of a dismounted reconnaissance MOS to fill not only the recommended LRSUs, but also dismounted cavalry troops and infantry battalion scout platoons in the IBCTs that focus solely on dismounted reconnaissance operations. This would not be an initial entry MOS, but one assessed into relatively early in a soldier's career. This would not necessarily require the creation of another MOS qualification course or using the leader-focused RSLC for this purpose. Soldiers in an infantry battalion, in current practice, try out or complete a unit level assessment and selection for the battalion scout platoon. As some brigades do already, this should also become the practice for the DCT in the reconnaissance squadron. These positions should be open to both 19D and 11B personnel, and perhaps 25C and 13F personnel as well. An initial probationary term of six months to a year would pass before changing any MOS coding. Soldiers could then return to their prior career path based on their own preferences or assessed ability. At the end of that period, however, they would stay in only

[136] Fowler, Fitzgerald, and Rose, "Retaining Army National Guard Long Range Surveillance Companies," 5.

dismount reconnaissance units through E-7. They would then become 11Zs, like the 11C MOS, or return to their parent MOS. The increased proficiency provided to existing IBCT dismount reconnaissance units could make them an acceptable option for employment in the EAB deep area if augmented with appropriate aviation and other support assets. The consolidated LRSU, if created, would receive soldiers in a similar manner, both directly from infantry companies and cavalry troops or soldiers already transitioned into IBCT scout units. Placement at an installation like Ft. Campbell or Ft. Bragg with a large enough population would facilitate reintegration back to their parent MOS if the soldier decides not to continue or assessed as inadequate.

Maintenance of a dismounted stealthy reconnaissance capability is essential to provide options to the future force commander. It is an integral part of the reconnaissance system our doctrine envisions. The 2016 elimination of these specialized units at the EAB level constrains options potentially necessary to the EAB commander in the future fight and continues the trend of degrading basic field craft and soldier skills foundational to unit capabilities. The terrain of recent conflict enabled an operational tempo that broke the "stealth threshold" for large scale use of stealthy reconnaissance but did not eliminate it entirely. The US Army must maintain this critical skill to enable commander flexibility and options at all levels.

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